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# CHRISTIAN BAPTISM,

AS DELIVERED TO THE

# CHURCHES,

BY THE

# *Evangelists and Apostles,*

IN THE

# NEW TESTAMENT.

IN A

# LETTER TO A FRIEND.

*Second Edition.*

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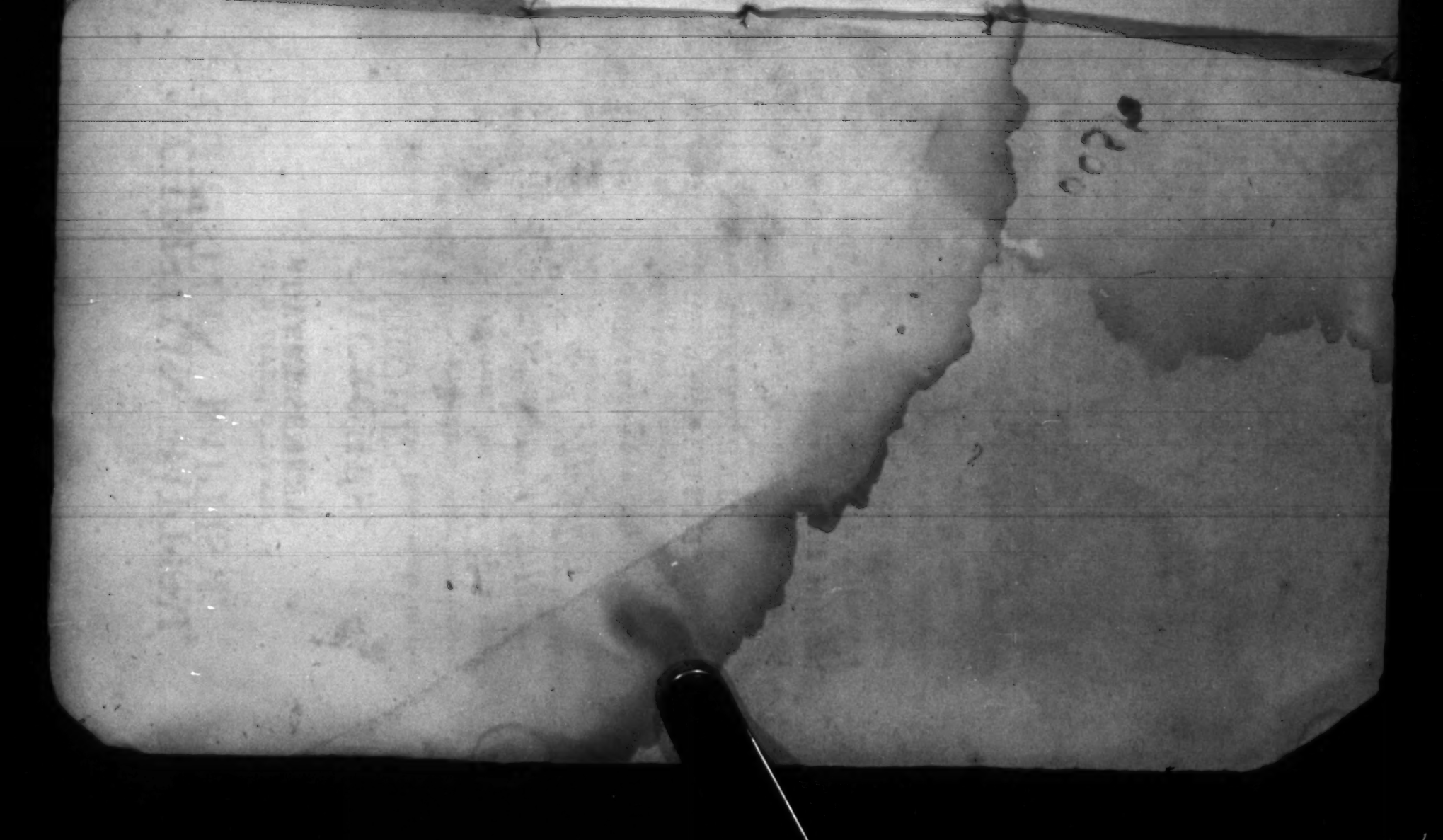

# ADVERTISEMENT.

REPEATED applications have been made to the writer of the following Letter, since publishing his last work on Baptism, to draw up a brief summary of "Christian Baptism," for the sake of such, as have not leisure to read more lengthy and argumentative discussions of the subject. Yielding to the solicitations of my friends, I consented to attempt to prepare this little Tract, of which notice was given in the last Minutes of the Warren Association.

My first design was to have published my remarks in a different form. But in attempting to write a letter to a particular Friend, I was led to notice the principal facts recorded in the New Testament, which so exactly comported with my previous design, that I concluded to enlarge the Letter, and publish it: Hoping by the blessing of God it may prove useful not only to one, but to thousands.

BOSTON, MARCH 28, 1812.

# CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

*My very dear Friend,*

KNOWING something of the perplexed state of your mind respecting baptism, I have for a considerable time wished an opportunity to converse freely with you on the subject. But particular circumstances have rendered it improper for me to introduce the subject when at your house: and not knowing whether an opportunity would soon offer to converse with you according to my wishes, I have concluded to address a few lines to you on this interesting concern, not doubting but you will receive them with kindness, and read them with candour.

When I first began to write, I intended nothing more than a private letter to you; but finding it impossible to lay before you a fair statement of Christian Baptism, as given us by the Evangelists and Apostles of our blessed Lord, without exceeding the limits of an ordinary letter; and believing that others might be profited as well as you, I have now concluded to transcribe and publish it.

I am encouraged to hope, that by the blessing of God, these friendly remarks may prove beneficial to you, and that you may hereby be enabled to discern with clearness and satisfaction, what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God; and what the Lord Jesus requires of you in order to keep his commandments.

I need not tell you, *my deur Friend*, how much I have felt interested in your eternal welfare. I trust you have not been insensible of it. Nor will you wonder, that I should feel a deep solicitude, that you may not mistake the right way, but be led by the *footsteps of the flock*: Always remembering that Christ, the good Shepherd, "calleth his sheep by name, and *leadeth them out*: and when he putteth forth his own sheep he *goeth before them*, and they follow him: for *they know* his voice." JOHN x. 3, 4.

I have no doubt but you earnestly desire to know what is right, and to act in such a manner, as to *answer a good conscience towards God*. In order to this, you must make his holy word, the rule of your conduct. We have little difficulty in complying with the will of Christ, whenever we feel the temper of that holy apostle, who could say, "*What things were gain to me*, (enumerating all his Jewish privileges,) *those I counted loss for Christ*." PHIL. III. 7. It is then, and then only, that we are willing to *follow the Lamb, whithersoever he goeth*.

I have now only to request, that with prayerful attention, and without prejudice or prepossession, you will examine the following remarks; carefully comparing them with those parts of the sacred scriptures on which they are predicated.

It is a point, I believe, admitted by christians of all denominations, that believers are proper subjects of Baptism. The dispute between us and others, is, whether *believers* are the *only proper subjects* of this ordinance. I freely confess, I have never been able to find but one kind of subjects described in the New Testament. The language appears exceedingly plain and simple, and the practice of the first christians is in perfect accordance with it. *Confession* of sin, *fruits* of repentance, and *faith* in the Lord Jesus Christ; or, in other words, believing with all the heart, were uniformly required, as qualifications for baptism: And we read of no instance, where any were ever admitted without them. In order, howev-

er, to satisfy you, that my statement is correct, I shall proceed to lay before you, a brief history of this institution, as it is given to us in the sacred Oracles.

As the ordinance of baptism is never mentioned in the Old Testament, nor was ever practised under that dispensation,* all our knowledge respecting it, must be derived from the New. My present design is, to follow the Evangelists and Apostles, and place before you, in a connected view, a faithful account of "Christian Baptism," as delivered to us in the writings of Christ and his apostles.

The first account of the baptismal institution, is in the third chapter of Matthew. Here John's ministry is introduced, as the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." And "There went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him *in* Jordan, confessing their sins." MATT. III. 5, 6.

Two things are here to be observed.

1. John baptized none, but such as made confession of their sins.

2. John did not baptize *by*, *from*, nor *with* Jordan, but IN Jordan. It is difficult to conceive for what purpose he should go down into Jordan, unless to immerse his candidates.

Among others, many of the Pharisees and Sadducees came to John to be baptized, but exhibiting no evidence of repentance towards God, or faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, he addressed them in the most faithful and solemn manner, "Bring forth fruits meet for repentance: and think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father." MATT. III. 8, 9.

But is not this the very ground on which it is attempted to support infant baptism? Most certainly; for this is the main pillar which supports the whole fabrick; yet John rejected it as totally invalid. Did he not act correctly? And if so, does not this decide the

* The scriptures know nothing of the baptism of proselytes.

point forever, that children cannot be admitted upon the faith of their parents? But it will probably be said, these were not children, but men, grown to years of understanding, and, therefore, capable of acting for themselves. This will be admitted; but still we ask, were they not as really children of Abraham now, as when but eight days old? If the covenant made with Abraham did not secure for his natural seed a right to baptism without their personally exhibiting the *fruits of repentance*, how can it secure to the seed of Gentile believers the same right while impenitent? Let us for a moment change the position, and suppose that these Pharisees had by some means failed of circumcision in their infancy, and had now requested to receive that rite on the same plea. i. e. that Abraham was their father; would they, or could they have been rejected? Let candour answer. If this remark be duly considered, we should suppose it must convince every person desirous of finding the truth, that circumcision and baptism are distinct in their nature and design, and that a scriptural qualification for one, furnishes no claim for the other.

The baptism of the Saviour, is the next instance recorded in this chapter.

VERSES 14—17. "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbade him, saying, It is I that have need to be baptized of thee, and thou comest to me! Jesus answered and said unto him, permit this at present: for thus ought we to ratify every institution. Then John acquiesced.* And Jesus when he was baptized went up straightway out of the water," &c.

I imagine I hear my *Friend* saying, "I really think that Jesus was baptized by immersion." And will not this explicit example of our condescending Redeemer, weigh more with a conscientious believer, than a thousand mere probabilities? I confess it does with me, notwithstanding all the attempts which have

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* Dr. Campbell's Translation.

been made, to prove that Christ's baptism is "not to be imitated by christians."

Mark and Luke mention the same things which we have noticed above. MARK I. 5—11. LUKE III. 7—9, 21, 22. But as these accounts agree in substance with the foregoing, it is deemed unnecessary particularly to notice them.

There are some things mentioned by John, which are not recorded by the other Evangelists: particularly the following. "After these things, (saith he,) came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea, and there he tarried with them and baptized. And John also was baptizing in Enon, near to Salim, *because there was much water* there. And *they* came and were baptized: for John was not yet cast into prison." "*And they came and were baptized.*" Who? The people, say some, who attended on John's ministry. But is it not more natural to suppose, that it means the disciples of Christ? We have a previous account of His baptism, but not of theirs. The word *Disciples*, seems to be the antecedent to the pronoun "they." But whether this were the case or not, the passage affords abundant proof, that John's baptism belonged to the gospel dispensation; and as such, ought to be considered as gospel baptism: unless for the sake of getting clear of the difficulty, it should be asserted, that Christ and his disciples were also ministers of the legal dispensation: for both John and Christ, with his disciples, were baptizing at the same time, and in the same neighbourhood.

In order to prove that John's baptism was under the law, it should first be proved, that the law required such a service. But where can such a requirement be found? The answer is, no where. We therefore take it as we find it recorded by Mark, That John's preaching and baptism were *the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ.* MARK I. 1.

In the beginning of the 4th chapter of John, it is said, "When, therefore, the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard, that Jesus *made* and baptized

more disciples than John, (though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) he left Judea," &c. It hence appears, that they first *made* disciples, and then baptized them. They did not baptize them in order to make them disciples, either now, or at some future period. The account here given serves also to show the fallacy of those who argue the baptism of infants from Christ's taking little children into his arms and blessing them. Jesus blessed them; but he baptized not, himself, but his disciples. That instance was evidently novel, or the disciples would not have opposed it.

The next thing to be noted, is, the great commission given by Christ to his apostles. "Go ye, therefore, into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." MATT. XXVIII. 19, 20. MARK XVI. 15, 16. It is here to be noted, that they were first to preach the gospel, and then to baptize such as gave evidence that they had received it. They had no direction to baptize any but such as professed to be believers. Matthew says, "Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father," &c. It is hence argued by some of our Pedobaptist brethren, that as infants are a part of all nations, therefore the commission authorises their baptism. But if the commission is not limited to such as are taught, and so taught as to believe, then adults must be baptized as well as infants: for they too are a part of all nations. But both are inadmissible. Baptism is declared, by an apostle, to be the answer of a good conscience towards God. 1 PET. III. 21. It is impossible to conceive, that an infant, or indeed, any other person than a believer, should answer a good conscience towards God, in being baptized.

Let us now follow the disciples, and we shall soon see how they understood their Lord's commission.

On the memorable day of Pentecost, when the apostles, according to Christ's promise, were *baptized*

*with** *the Holy Ghost and fire*; and while the astonished multitude were many of them pricked in the heart, and crying, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter, under this divine energy, addressed them, saying, "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." ACTS II. 38, 39. Here observe, Peter did not exhort them to be baptized, and then repent at some future period; nor does he make any promises to them, but what are connected with repentance. The promise mentioned in the 39th verse, I am inclined to think, either referred to the gift of the Holy Ghost, mentioned in the preceding verse; or to the ancient promise made to Abraham, "In thy *seed*, shall all the families of the earth be blessed." GEN. XII. 3. *Which* SEED *was Christ.* GAL. III. 16. Although the apostle seems to be very general in urging this promise as an encouragement, yet he is particularly careful to limit its blessings, *to as many as the Lord our God shall call.* These, whether old or young, whether Jews that were nigh, or Gentiles afar off, should be alike blessed; provided the Lord should call them by his grace, and make them willing in the day of his power.

There is a very obvious reason, for the apostle's noticing children in the above connection. He was now addressing the men, who, *with wicked hands*, had been guilty of crucifying Jesus. And it will be remembered, that they had imprecated his blood, that is, the guilt of it, upon themselves and *their children*, when Pilate sought to release him. In order, therefore, to remove every discouragement which might arise from the above imprecation, he assured them, that the promise was to all that the Lord our God shall call.

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* Dr. Campbell renders the preposition *in* water, and *in* the Holy Ghost, and fire.' MATT. iii. 11.

As further proof of the correctness of this statement, permit me to invite your attention to the subsequent part of this account. VERSE 41.—"Then they that *gladly received his word* were baptized." Is it possible to believe, that there were any infants, or unconverted children included in this account? Is there not abundant evidence to the contrary? The candidates are said not only to have received the word, but to have "received it *gladly*." That is, with the whole heart and soul. "And the same day there were added unto them about 3000 souls." Here we have further evidence that none of this number were infants; for those who baptize infants, do not add them to the church, nor consider, or treat them as church members. But what follows, will, as we should suppose, put it beyond all reasonable dispute. VERSE 42.—"And they continued stedfastly in the apostle's doctrine, and fellowship; and in breaking of bread and in prayers." Surely this could not be the work of mere babes. Read to the end of the chapter, and you will find, that every word goes to prove, that the 3000 who were baptized, were adults, and not children who were incapable of knowing any thing about the gospel.

We meet with nothing more on the subject, until we come to the 8th chapter. Here we are told, that "Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them,—and there was great joy in that city." The preaching of Christ faithfully has usually produced this effect. At the 12th verse it is said, "When they believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, *both men and women*. No mention is made of children; the conclusion is irresistible,—that there were none baptized. The probable reason is assigned in the text. They believed what Philip preached *concerning the kingdom of God*; that it was to be composed of believers only. The time was now come, when God's house was to be built of lively stones: so that it might be a spiritual

house, capable of offering up spiritual sacrifices to God by Jesus Christ. 1 PET. ii.

In this same chapter, we have an account of the baptism of the Ethiopian Eunuch. When he proposed himself as a candidate, Philip replied to him, "If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest." But can any reason be assigned, why Philip should require such a confession of faith from the Eunuch, and baptize others without any confession at all, which he must have done, provided he baptized infants? Can you, my Friend, believe him guilty of such inconsistency? I am persuaded you cannot. But this account is highly interesting to us in another point of light. It shows, beyond a reasonable doubt, the *mode* of baptism, if we may so speak. When the Eunuch had declared his faith in Jesus, as "the Son of God," —*they went down both into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch; and he baptized him.* And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the Eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing." Thousands of others have travelled the same delightful road, and found their joys the same.

The foregoing passage is so decidedly in favour of immersion, and bears such a manifest resemblance to the baptism of Jesus, that those who endeavour to maintain a different practice, have always appeared to be extremely embarrassed to know how to dispose of it with any tolerable plausibility.

Sometimes recourse is had to Greek prepositions; and we are told, that going *down into*, means no more than going down "unto;" that is, to the water's edge: and that coming *up out* of the water, should be rendered coming up "from" the water.

A late author has given us a new exposition, i. e. that "*into* Jordan, means any where within the banks of the river." In reply to what is said, Mark i. 5, that John baptized *in* the river of Jordan, he says, "he might be *in the midst of Jordan*, and not be in the water!" And all this is proved to demonstration,

from Joshua iii. 17, &c. where we have the account of the priests' bearing the Ark into the midst of Jordan; and that the waters were parted, so that the people passed over on dry ground. This, it will be acknowledged, was one of those astonishing miracles which God wrought, in carrying the tribes of Israel to the promised land. So, in like manner, if John could for a moment stand in the *midst* of Jordan upon dry land, it must have been by a miracle; but to suppose this, during the whole of his baptizing, must have been to suppose a miracle much more astonishing than that wrought for the Israelites. But it should be remembered, that *John did no miracle*: that is, no miracle attended his administration. What credit ought to be given to the reasonings of a man, who has recourse to such absurdities, the public will judge.*

Again, It is sometimes argued, that they had nothing to carry water in. Admitting this to be true, (which, however, is not at all probable,) if no more was necessary than for Philip to wet his fingers and put them on the Eunuch's forehead, surely they needed not both to have gone down INTO the water for this? But, if the Eunuch was to be immersed, this was absolutely necessary. It could not be decently performed without. Let precisely such an account be given of a baptizing at the present day, and there is not a person of any denomination who would hesitate a moment, in determining to what denomination of christians they belonged. It must be a peculiar satisfaction to know, that our practice so perfectly resembles that of the primitive christians, as not to be distinguished from it. Or, in other words, that in describing theirs, we identify our own. If there be a doubt upon the mind of any in what manner we ought to be baptized, it will be always safe to follow the example here given us, of apostolic practice. Practising as they did, we can-

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* See Cat. on Baptism, page 4.

not be wrong; but in differing from them we are liable to err.*

In the 10th of Acts we have the account of Peter's being called to the house of Cornelius; of his preaching, and of the wonderful effects of the gospel upon this assembly of Gentiles. In this discourse the apostle gave a brief account of the character, preaching, miracles, life, death, and resurrection of Christ. "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell upon all them that heard the word." Perceiving

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* The public have lately been entertained with a work from the pen of the Rev. Reuben Emerson, A. M. which he calls a "Catechism; exhibiting in a plain and concise manner, the scripture account of baptism." The Author has enriched his work with a considerable number of *plates*, so that the eyes of his "common readers," as well as their intellects, may assist them in understanding his subject. But after all, we think that some of them must be exceedingly puzzled: for he has unfortunately represented the act of baptizing in a manner, which, we believe, neither he nor any other person ever saw performed. The first plate represents Christ and John standing in the water ancle deep. The Saviour stooping forward, and John pouring water copiously upon the back of the head or neck! A similar description is given of Philip and the Eunuch, and several others, excepting that they are all standing safe on dry land. The author, it seems, perceived his unhappy blunder, of pouring water on the *back of the head*, before his book had got wholly through the press. But in correcting the error, he is equally unfortunate. He has still represented baptism in a light as completely at variance with his own practice, as it is with apostolic baptism. In representing the baptism of the jailor, he presents the administrator, standing with a large waterpot by him; the jailor standing erect before him, and the water trickling from his nose and chin. But the plate, after all, appears extremely deficient to answer his purpose. Why had he not thought to have placed a babe in the mother's arms advancing to receive baptism? He might have done it as well as not. As he has presented none but adults, his "common readers" may, after all, be led to doubt whether any others were baptized. But all his fanciful representations look extremely unlike any thing we have ever seen practised among Pædobaptists. This reminds us of a guide-post, that directs the traveller in a way which it never goes itself.

this, the apostle asked, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" i. e. Can any of my Jewish brethren object to the baptism of these Gentile converts, seeing God has owned them by giving them the Holy Ghost? But here is not a single word about the baptism of any, whether old or young, who had not received the Holy Ghost. This is mentioned as the ground on which their claim rested.

The planting of the church at Corinth perfectly accords with the preceding. It proceeds as follows, "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized." ACTS XVIII. 8. Not a word do we find as yet of the baptism of infants.

But there are two or three households mentioned, is it not likely there were some infants in them? These certainly bid fairest to furnish the desired information. It will be remembered, however, that we have just mentioned one household, which, we are informed, were all believers, and therefore not infants. Although nothing directly is said of their baptism, unless they are included with the other Corinthians.

The next account of baptism, is the jailor and his family. This man, it appears, had in his custody Paul and Silas, whom he had put into the inner prison, and secured in the stocks. At midnight, they prayed and sung praises. God heard them, and answered their prayers by an extraordinary earthquake, which opened all the prison doors. The affrighted jailor, waking out of sleep, and finding the doors all open, and supposing the prisoners had availed themselves of this opportunity to escape, drew out his sword with a view to kill himself. Paul prevented him, by declaring that the prisoners were all quiet. The jailor, convicted in his own conscience by the Spirit of God, fell at the feet of Paul and Silas, and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and all thy house:" That is, thy household

also, if they believe, shall be saved: for no one will suppose that the jailor's family could be saved in unbelief, any more than others. The account proceeds, "And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to *all* that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed (not baptized) their stripes, and was baptized, he and all his straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, *believing in God with all his house.*" If this passage were not specially wanted to countenance infant baptism, no one would dispute this household's being all believers any more than they would the household of Crispus, mentioned above. The whole account, without the least torturing, is in perfect agreement with our views of gospel order. The word was first spoken to the jailor and to all in his house. It is said, he believed in God with all his house, and they were all baptized. They were all fit subjects of the ordinance according to our sentiments. I should rejoice to baptize such households at any time.

Our Pædobaptist brethren suppose there were infants in the jailor's household, and reason from this supposition as though it were an admitted fact. But on what ground is this supposition supported? I know not, unless it be on this, that it is common in some families to have infants. Hence they suppose there were some here. I suppose there were none; and have been brought to this conclusion from the following reasons. 1. There are none mentioned: this alone is sufficient to destroy any supposition to the contrary. 2. The apostle spake the word to all that were in the house: it is highly improbable that any would be collected on this midnight occasion who were incapable of understanding the word. 3. It is expressly said he believed in God with all his house. No piece of sacred history, without special management, would look with more forbidding aspect upon infant baptism than this. The pains that have been taken to render this passage subservient to the baptism of unbelievers, must excite a strong suspicion that its

advocates are hardly pushed, and that they find the scriptures exceedingly barren of any positive proof of the point.

In the same chapter we have an account of the conversion and baptism of Lydia. The subject is treated with great brevity; yet the incidents related are sufficient to direct us in forming a correct judgment of the transaction.

On the Sabbath day, Paul and his companions went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made: probably to a *Proseucha*, or place where devout people collected for prayer. Here he spake to the women that resorted thither. *And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there. And she constrained us.* ACTS XVI. 13, 14. But what is there here to support infant baptism? Nothing more than merely that a *household* is mentioned. But neither husband nor children make any part of the account. Who Lydia's household were we are left to conjecture, excepting that it is said in the 40th verse: "And they went out of the prison, (that is, Paul and Silas,) and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed." There is the greatest reason to conclude, that these were the persons baptized with Lydia, and probably, persons in her employ. This appears the more probable, as she is represented as still belonging to Thyatira, but who was led by her commercial concerns, to reside, a part of her time at least, in the city of Philippi. Further the scripture saith not.

I have designedly omitted giving any particular account of the baptism of Paul; because no one disputes his being a real convert at the time of his baptism; and as no one was baptized with him, it is

impossible that it should afford any pretence for infant baptism. Nor do I conceive that any argument can be drawn from what is mentioned in the 19th of Acts, respecting some of John's disciples, with whom Paul met at Ephesus. Whether these were re-baptized or not, does not affect the argument, either as it respects the subjects or mode. They are said to be men, and not babes. The question respecting them was not whether they were *believers*, or whether they had been *properly baptized*; but whether *they had received the Holy Ghost since they believed!*

I have now, my dear Friend, placed before you all the instances of baptism recorded in the New Testament, during the ministry of Christ and his apostles; a space of nearly thirty years. And not a single instance is to be found in this whole history, of the baptism of an infant. Had these apostles been of the same sentiments of our Pædobaptist brethren, would they not, in giving an account of their planting churches, and frequently baptizing, have somewhere mentioned children? To me, it is morally certain that they would. To satisfy you, however, that I have some reason for this opinion, you will permit me to introduce two or three extracts from their journals; and you will then see whether they agree with those given by the apostles, which we have been considering.

My first extract shall be from the journal of the late Rev. David Brainerd. It is as follows: "Lord's day, July 21, 1745, I baptized my interpreter, and wife. July 26, baptized my interpreter's children. ——Lord's day, Nov. 3, I baptized 14 persons of the Indians, 6 adults, and 8 children. Nov. 4, baptized a child this day.——I have now baptized 47 persons of the Indians, 23 adults, and 24 children." Thus far Mr. Brainerd. Had we found any thing like this in the Acts of the Apostles, the dispute would be at an end.

I will now present you with an extract of a later date. This I take from a communication made to the Congregational Massachusetts Missionary Society. It is dated Haverhill, Oct. 29, 1804. "Yesterday I

advocates are hardly pushed, and that they find the scriptures exceedingly barren of any positive proof of the point.

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impossible that it should afford any pretence for infant baptism. Nor do I conceive that any argument can be drawn from what is mentioned in the 19th of Acts, respecting some of John's disciples, with whom Paul met at Ephesus. Whether these were re-baptized or not, does not affect the argument, either as it respects the subjects or mode. They are said to be men, and not babes. The question respecting them was not whether they were *believers*, or whether they had been *properly baptized*; but whether *they had received the Holy Ghost since they believed!*

I have now, my dear Friend, placed before you all the instances of baptism recorded in the New Testament, during the ministry of Christ and his apostles; a space of nearly thirty years. And not a single instance is to be found in this whole history, of the baptism of an infant. Had these apostles been of the same sentiments of our Pædobaptist brethren, would they not, in giving an account of their planting churches, and frequently baptizing, have somewhere mentioned children? To me, it is morally certain that they would. To satisfy you, however, that I have some reason for this opinion, you will permit me to introduce two or three extracts from their journals; and you will then see whether they agree with those given by the apostles, which we have been considering.

My first extract shall be from the journal of the late Rev. David Brainerd. It is as follows: "Lord's day, July 21, 1745, I baptized my interpreter, and wife. July 26, baptized my interpreter's children. ——Lord's day, Nov. 3, I baptized 14 persons of the Indians, 6 adults, and 8 children. Nov. 4, baptized a child this day.——I have now baptized 47 persons of the Indians, 23 adults, and 24 children." Thus far Mr. Brainerd. Had we found any thing like this in the Acts of the Apostles, the dispute would be at an end.

I will now present you with an extract of a later date. This I take from a communication made to the Congregational Massachusetts Missionary Society. It is dated Haverhill, Oct. 29, 1804. "Yesterday I

returned home from my mission to the new settlements, in the North Western parts of the State of New York; have been out upward of 17 weeks: during which time, I rode 1320 miles, preached 88 sermons, administered the Lord's supper 5 times, baptized 35 children," &c.* These may serve as a general specimen of their journals.

We should suppose it impossible, for any one to compare these accounts with those given by the apostles, and not be struck with the manifest difference between them. If both parties proceeded alike, how can this difference be accounted for? Or, if indeed the apostles baptized children, what possible reason can be assigned for their neglecting ever to mention it? Is not the very supposition of such neglect an impeachment of their integrity? Especially, as they were appointed by Christ, to plant churches, and set in order the things that were wanting; and as their conduct in this respect was to be considered as a model for all succeeding ages?

But if there be no mention of infant baptism in the scriptures, you will ask, why is it then practised? And on what ground do any attempt to defend it? I answer, they infer it from what is called in the New Testament the *covenant of circumcision.*† This covenant is found at large in the 17th chapter of Genesis. By this covenant, Abraham was commanded to circumcise himself when he was 99 years old; and also to circumcise all the males of his house, without any regard to their moral or religious characters.‡ The extent of this requirement may be seen in the words following. VERSES 11, 12, 13, 14.—"*And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man-child of your generations; he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger,*

* Mass. Miss. Magazine, pages 245, 246. † Acts vii. 8.

‡ Isaac, the *heir* of promise, was not yet born.

*which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh, for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.*" I have given you, *my dear Friend*, this complete view of the covenant made with Abraham, in order that you may examine it, and see if you can possibly make out from it, a command of Jesus Christ to baptize either infants or adults. As strange as it may appear, this is the very ground on which infant baptism rests.

If this assertion needed proof, I have only to request you to turn to Dr. Spring's charge delivered to the young gentlemen lately ordained at Salem; and you will see the sentiment in its entire form. Addressing these missionaries, he says, "If God shall succeed and bless your labours of love among the heathen, in multiplying hopeful converts, you will establish churches, break to them the bread of life, *and apply the seals of the covenant* TO THE CHILDREN AND DOMESTICS *of believers, agreeably to the* PRACTICE OF ABRAHAM the father of the faithful, and the subsequent friends of truth, who tread in his steps."* This is carrying the subject completely to its source. Abraham's circumcising Ishmael and his servants, and not the command of Jesus Christ, is the ground on which these young missionaries are sent to India, to baptize the *children* and *domestics* of Hindoo converts! As by the very terms of the charge, these children and domestics are not supposed to be believers, I would seriously ask, in what light they are to be looked upon when baptized? Are they in consequence of this act to be considered as christians, or only as baptized pagans? They will doubtless belong to one or the other of these classes.

If any thing like the above paragraph in Dr. Spring's charge, can be found in the Saviour's direc-

* Page 35.

tions to his disciples, or in Paul's epistles to Timothy and Titus, or indeed in any other part of the New Testament, then will we acknowledge the sentiment to be correct. But if neither Christ, nor his apostles have ever delivered any such sentiment, we conclude, that every inquiring, conscientious christian, will be justified in rejecting it.

We should rather think the Doctor had imposed a very difficult task upon his young friends, in order to keep his charge. For although Hindoo babes can make no more resistance than other babes, yet we should think it quite likely, that their old, sturdy domestics, might not be so willing to resign *cast*, merely because their masters had seen fit to change their religion.

It is not because Christ has given no command to baptize, that this provision in the covenant of circumcision is recurred to; for on this subject, his directions are clear and decisive. But, probably, the New Testament institution is thought to be less propitious to babes, as they are not named in Christ's commission, nor, as we believe, included.

Our Pædobaptist brethren tell us, the church is still under this Abrahamic covenant; and therefore, children ought to have the seal applied to them: and that baptism now seals the same covenant, which was formerly sealed by circumcision. But when we demand the authority, by which they make this alteration, we get no direct answer. Sometimes we are told, that Christ's taking little children into his arms, and blessing them, and saying *of such* is the kingdom of heaven, was recognizing their covenant right to baptism: but it has been shown with so much clearness, that Christ did not baptize them, nor say a word about their baptism, that this is now pretty generally given up. The plea most depended upon, is, that they once had a right to the seal of the covenant, and this right, say they, has never been abrogated; therefore, they ought now to be baptized.

But is not this reasoning at a very extraordinary rate! To argue, that a command to *circumcise*, is a

command to baptize, is a mode of reasoning never applied to any other case. But this is not all; that law was explicit. *Thou shalt circumcise every* MAN-CHILD, *born in thy house, or bought with thy money.* But does this authorise the baptism of both males and females? A very extraordinary conclusion indeed! Furthermore, that law required that the child should be circumcised on the *eighth day.* It could not lawfully be done before, nor might it be omitted on any pretence whatever, where it was possible. But our brethren will baptize either sex, on the very day they are born; or, without the least consciousness of blame, omit it until weeks afterwards. What authority can we suppose a law to have, which is capable of such management? Has the all-wise Lawgiver left such a discretionary power to his creatures, as thus to change and alter his positive institutions, to suit their own convenience?

That these two institutions are totally distinct, and not at all dependent upon each other, the scriptures furnish, to my mind, the most clear and satisfactory evidence. It would not comport with my present design, to enter into a lengthy discussion of the subject. I shall therefore content myself, with only adducing two or three facts recorded by the apostles, which have served fully to confirm my mind in the foregoing statement; and I doubt not, if you examine them with candour, they will appear to you in the same light.

Permit me then, my dear friend, to request you to read with care, the 15th chapter of Acts. Here you will perceive, that a young church had been gathered at Antioch, chiefly composed of Gentile converts. Probably for a time they enjoyed peace; "but certain men which went down from Judea, taught the brethren, and said, except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." This introduced a very serious difficulty. After labouring without effect, to adjust the matter, it was finally determined, that Paul and Barnabas should go up to

Jerusalem, and refer the question to the apostles and elders; and obtain their opinion upon the subject.

When the council had come together, the delegates from the church at Antioch, gave a particular account of the good word of God which had been in that city, and of the difficulties introduced among them by the brethren from Judea. The question, as stated by Paul and Barnabas, occasioned considerable disputing among the apostles and elders. But we have only a part of what was offered by Peter and James, together with the final result, handed down to us.

In speaking to the case, Peter observed, that God had given the same spirit to these Gentile converts, as unto them; "and put no difference, (saith he) between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith." Evidently disapproving of the conduct of his Jewish brethren, he adds: "Now therefore why tempt ye God, to PUT A YOKE upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" Here we also see, in what light this apostle viewed circumcision: i. e. as an insupportable yoke.

After some observations made by Paul and Barnabas, in confirmation of what Peter had said, James spoke to the same effect. In the course of his remarks he observed, that what had taken place at Antioch, was but the fulfilment of what the prophets had said respecting the conversion of the Gentiles; and concluded by offering the following motion: "Wherefore, my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles have turned unto God; but that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollution of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood." This motion was adopted by the council; and chosen brethren sent with Paul and Barnabas to confirm the same things by mouth.

Thus by the unanimous voice of a council, comprising most, if not all the apostles and elders of the whole christian church, and by the approbation of the

"HOLY GHOST," we see *circumcision put down*, and *no* SUBSTITUTE *proposed in its room!* In this whole account there is not the most distant hint, that baptism was to be practised in the room of circumcision! If these apostles and elders had understood the subject as our Pædobaptist brethren do, is it not perfectly unaccountable, that they should not have mentioned it on this perplexing occasion? To me, I confess, the supposition is too unreasonable to be admitted.—Had they but simply made the statement which our brethren constantly make in arguing with us, it would at once have put an end to the dispute in that church, and have prevented any on the subject in future; for we all consent to submit to apostolic decision.

In the 21st chapter of the Acts, there is a case stated still plainer, if possible, than the one we have been considering, (see verses 18—22,) when Paul made his last visit to Jerusalem. The day after his arrival, he went in unto James, and all the elders were present. Before these, he rehearsed what wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles, by his ministry. "And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord." But one of them immediately remarked, "*Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of the Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law: and they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles, to forsake Moses, saying, they* OUGHT NOT TO CIRCUMCISE THEIR CHILDREN." Here the question concerning circumcision is again brought directly to view, and Paul is charged with teaching his Jewish converts to neglect it; but in case he had taught them to baptize their children in its room, was he not called upon, in the most imperious manner, to have declared it in self-defence? Let any candid person, that is willing to undertake, give a fair answer to this question. If there ever was an occasion which required such a statement, it was the present. The total silence of the apostle on the subject, when he was thus pressed by his Jewish brethren, is irresistible proof to

my mind, that no such practice was then in existence.

I will here take the liberty to state a plain case, and leave it to the consciences of all who read it to answer. Should the missionaries which have lately gone from this country to India, be happily instrumental of the conversion of a number of Jews in that quarter of the world; and should these Jews manifest a willingness to be baptized themselves, but should insist, like those above noticed, upon continuing circumcision to their children, according to the immemorial usages of their ancestors: I appeal to our Pædobaptist brethren to decide, whether these young ministers would not, at once, revolt at the idea; and tell them plainly, that circumcision was done away with the other rites of the ceremonial law; and that baptism was now to be practised in its room. In case these converts should persist in their determination, would they not be likely to repeat to them, what the apostle said to the Galatians: "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." GAL. V. 2.

Considering these rites distinct, as these believing Jews undoubtedly did; and there is nothing unnatural in the supposition, that they should still insist upon circumcising their children according to the custom of their ancestors: while at the same time, they would willingly be baptized themselves in conformity to the laws of the new dispensation. But to admit the argument of our brethren, would prove them still to be Jews, and not christians.

If Paul taught and practised as our Pædobaptist brethren do, we must suppose, that wherever he carried the gospel, he carried infant-baptism. And hence, if any objected to his neglecting circumcision, he had only to inform them that he practised baptism in its room, and the objection must cease. In this case, I imagine, he would have made some such declaration as the following, to the above charge. "It is true, my brethren, as you have heard, that I teach such as receive the gospel under my ministry,

*not to circumcise their children*, as you well know that that rite is superseded by baptism; and as the latter is applied to children as well as the former, it would be highly absurd to teach them to observe both." Would not this plain statement have removed every objection which they urged? Can any man in his sober senses believe, that he would not have made a declaration to this amount, had he known the fact?

The objection against Paul for neglecting to initiate children into the covenant, is the same in substance, as that which is made against the Baptists at the present day. Nor do we perceive that he was able to give a more satisfactory answer to those who objected, than we are: but if he had administered the seal in another form, he would have had greatly the advantage of us.

I have now, my dear Friend, laid before you all the direct testimony which the New Testament furnishes concerning baptism. I have also stated some of my reasons, for not believing that infant baptism was practised by the apostles.

I cannot but hope, that what I have written will be satisfactory to your mind, and serve to establish you in the truth; but should it not have this effect, I shall only regret, that either I have failed in representing this christian ordinance with sufficient clearness, or that the prejudices of education have prevented you from seeing it, in its original purity.

From what has now been offered, the following observations may fairly be deduced, viz.

1. It is evident that a great proportion of the first Jewish converts, continued to practise circumcision. This appears from the two preceding statements from the 15th and 21st chapters of Acts.

2. As they continued to circumcise their children, it is morally certain they did not baptize them at the same time; and as a *seal* of the same covenant.

3. If baptism has taken the place of circumcision, and signifies the same thing, and seals the same covenant; then there must have been the same im-

propriety in baptizing upon a profession of faith, any who had been the subjects of that rite; as there now is, in administering the ordinance to those, who have been baptized in their infancy.

4. If our Pædobaptist brethren state the subject fairly, that *infant-baptism* exactly answers to *infant-circumcision*, and the apostles acted consistently in baptizing such as professed their faith in Christ without any regard to circumcision, then the Baptists act consistently in baptizing on a profession of faith, such as have been baptized in infancy. The same arguments that will vindicate the apostles from the charge of inconsistency, will vindicate us.

5. If it be a duty to baptize infants, it must be so because it is commanded; if not commanded, for that very reason it ought not to be practised. But where, we ask, is there any such command? If in the Bible, we can only say, we have never been able to discover it: nor have we found any person who could point it out to us.

6. But it is often said, "although there may be no express command to baptize infants, yet surely there can be no harm in thus publickly dedicating our offspring to God." This is a very incorrect sentiment, and attended with consequences dishonourable to God, and highly injurious to the happiness of believers.

To pretend to practise as a *divine institution*, what God has not commanded, is no less than to dictate to the Almighty, and implicitly to impeach his wisdom and goodness.——*He that reproveth God, let him answer it.*

It is injurious in its consequences; in that, besides (as we have reason to fear,) leading too many to think more highly of themselves than they ought to think, as standing in a covenant relation to God, and therefore less exposed to the divine displeasure than other sinners; it keeps thousands of real christians from obeying the divine command,—to *repent and be*

*baptized, in the name of Jesus Christ.** A vast number of truly godly persons are often exceedingly tried on this point; and are frequently heard to say, "If I had not been baptized in my infancy, I should have no doubts with respect to my present duty." Thus many are forever prevented the pleasure of *knowing* that they obey Christ, or of following him in his precious example.

The idea of our "recognizing," (as it is called,) our baptism, or of taking upon ourselves what we are told our parents did for us in the moments of unconscious infancy, is a service wholly unknown in the Bible; and stands upon the same footing of sponsors, godfathers, godmothers, &c.

Although the preceding remarks, if admitted, will go to invalidate the practice of our Pædobaptist brethren; yet, I am sure you will not judge me to be wanting in christian affection to such of them as truly love the Lord. I can say in the sincerity of my heart, and I believe I speak the language of my brethren, that I truly regard all that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth. Being agreed with many of them in the great and fundamental doctrines of the gospel, it has ever been my wish, *as far as we are agreed,* to unite in the common cause of our glorious Redeemer. But if they choose still to keep us at a distance, and treat us as an heretical sect, merely because we cannot admit to the Lord's table such as *to us* are unbaptized; we can only regret, that our views are no more in unison with each other. May the Lord help us all to examine ourselves, and see where the blame lies.

Perhaps, after all, it will be said, that other denominations will admit the Baptists to their communion, and why cannot you admit them to yours? The cases are by no means similar. For although *they* may be baptized to themselves, or in their own view, they are not so to us. On the other hand, we are not only



* Acts ii. 38.

baptized in our own view, but in theirs also, themselves being judges."*

Should the period ever arrive, (and I pray God to hasten it,) when the truly pious of both denominations shall cordially unite; when difference of opinion on *one* point only, shall not prevent our union in all others, then shall we be one in the most important sense. On this ground we have long extended the hand of friendship: but to go further we dare not, while we remember that our Lord has said, *He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me: and he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.* MATT. X. 37, 38.

I have now gone through with what I intended, in exhibiting a plain statement of "christian baptism" from the New Testament. I have designedly omitted those passages in which the words *baptize* and *baptism* are used in a figurative sense; not because I think they have any unfavourable bearing on our sentiments, for I think quite the reverse; but because I think them not very material to the argument, although their weight may be all cast into the right scale.

Those who undertake to deny, that immersion was universally practised by the whole christian church, for 12 or 13 hundred years after Christ, excepting in particular cases, forfeit all claim either to candour or learning. This fact is fully proved, by the most respectable writers among the Pedobaptists. If any one wishes to see this proof, we refer him to Dr. Wall's Defence of his History of Infant-baptism, against Dr. Gale,—Moshiem's Ecclesiastical History, the Magdeburg Centuriators, &c.

But should you ask, is there nothing to be done for our children? I answer, yes, undoubtedly much.

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* Pædobaptists often immerse believers, which they certainly would not do, did they not believe it to be valid baptism. But we never on any occasion presume to sprinkle infants.

But let us not by our great anxiety for them imitate Saul, who unwilling to wait in God's appointed way, *forced himself and offered a burnt offering.** Upon which, Samuel told him that he had done foolishly; and that he had *not kept the commandment of the Lord*, notwithstanding he had sacrificed. Under the gospel dispensation, we are not to learn the duties we owe to our children from Abraham's covenant, nor from the law of Moses; but from Christ and his apostles. The voice from heaven proclaimed, "This is my beloved Son, HEAR HIM." Let us then inquire what Christ has said and done, respecting children. "*Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.*" MATT. XIX. 13, 14. MARK X. 14. LUKE XVIII. 15, 16. This account is given us by three evangelists above mentioned. They all refer to a particular instance, although there is some small variation in their accounts. The case was undoubtedly new and singular, or the disciples would not probably have rebuked those who brought them. I am inclined to think with Dr. Doddridge, that they were not brought for healing; for in that case, the disciples would not have been likely to have discouraged their coming: but they were brought to him for his blessing: or that he should "lay his hands on them and pray." The disciples very probably thought their Lord too much occupied, to concern himself with these *little ones* who were incapable of understanding his doctrine. But it afforded a most interesting occasion for Jesus to show his condescension and regard to this helpless part of our fallen race; of which so great a proportion never arrive to years of understanding. But what does this example teach us? Undoubtedly, that we should bring our children to Christ now for the same purpose.—They equally need his blessing; and he is equally capable of bestowing it on them, as if he were on earth.

* 1 Sam. xiii. 12.

But as this is the only reason assigned for their being brought, it would be a very singular and extraordinary conclusion, to infer their baptism from this transaction. Let us not be wise above what is written. It is added, *for of such is the kingdom of heaven.* Well, say some, are they not fit subjects for baptism, if they are fit for the kingdom of heaven? This does not necessarily follow. Angels are fit for the kingdom of heaven, but they are not fit subjects of this institution: no more are infants, for it is limited to *repenting sinners.* I recollect somewhere to have met with a very happy remark on this text. I thought it was by Doddridge, but I do not find it in his notes on the passage. I will however give it according to my best recollection. "*Of such is the kingdom of heaven:* that is, such a vast proportion of the human race die in infancy, who are all saved by the atonement of Christ, that it may be said with propriety, *of such* is the kingdom of heaven." This is at least a pleasant reflection to parents who are called to part with their children at this early period.

Christ's words are much of the same import, where he said to the disciples, "except ye be converted and become as *little children*, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." MATT. XVIII. 3. The great object here seems to have been to inculcate meekness and humility. "Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this *little child*, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one *such* little child," who is thus humbled, "receiveth me. But whoso shall offend one of *these little ones that* BELIEVE IN ME, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea." The Baptists have been charged implicitly with thus offending little children, in not admitting them to baptism; and this awful threatening turned against them. But it must first be proved that Christ admitted them to baptism, before we can justly be charged with offending them by denying it to them. It is also to be remarked, that Christ says, "these little ones that *be-*

*lieve* in me." To such we never deny baptism, whenever we can obtain the evidence.

The foregoing are all the instances which occur to my recollection, where children were particularly noticed by Christ, excepting when he fed the multitude in the desert with five loaves and two fishes. Here it is said, "And they that had eaten, were about five thousand men, beside women and *children*."

I must ask your patience, my *dear Friend*, to one remark more. Most, if not all the churches mentioned in the New Testament were planted by the apostles before the book of Acts was written. And all the epistles were written, as appears by the chronology in our Bibles, either a little before, or soon after. Unless we except John's epistles, and what he wrote to the seven churches of Asia. The writer of the book of Acts carries his history up to A. D. 63. Most of Paul's epistles were written before this. His second epistle to Timothy, which was probably his last work, as *he was then ready to be offered*, was written A. D. 66. The second epistle of Peter was written about the same time. Those of James and Jude were several years earlier. St. John's epistles were probably written about A. D. 90, and the book of Revelation completed A. D. 96.

In two of Paul's epistles he particularly mentions children, (EPH. VI. 1. COL. III. 20.) "Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right." Again, "Children, obey your parents in all things; for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord." In both places he also exhorts parents, or rather fathers. "And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

If baptism made any part of the duty of parents to their children, how surprising it is that they should not be reminded of it by some of the apostles. Pedobaptists, it is believed, are seldom wanting on this point. If children were then dedicated to God by baptism as they now are, how happens it that there

are no exhortations to *them* to remember their "*baptismal vows?*" &c.

If we obtain mercy of God to be faithful, we shall daily present our children in our prayers to Jesus, and entreat him to bless them. We shall also be more concerned to bring them up in the *nurture and admonition of the Lord*, than to indulge them in the fashionable amusements of the world. But I will not enlarge.

I now beseech you, my Friend, to read with candour what has been stated in the preceding pages, and ponder with great seriousness the facts which may have presented themselves to your mind in the perusal. And should you feel a conviction, that John the Baptist, Christ and his apostles, administered baptism to such only as professed repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; you will then see the unavoidable conclusion, viz. that none but such ought now to be baptized. If the places chosen for the administration of the ordinance, such as *Jordan, and Enon near to Salim, because there was much water there;* their going down *into* the water; and being baptized *in* Jordan, and coming up straightway *out of the water;* together with the plain signification of the word, which a vast proportion of the most learned and respectable Pædobaptists acknowledge means immersion, should produce a conviction in your mind that this must have been the ancient manner of baptizing, then you can be at no loss, in what way you ought to be baptized.

You will be told, that John's baptism was under the law; and therefore not to be taken into the account. It will be admitted that the ceremonial law did not wholly cease, until the death of Christ; but this does not prove that John did not introduce the new, the gospel dispensation. This has been often acknowledged by our Pædobaptist brethren, when not disputing on baptism. But suppose it to be a fact, that John did not baptize in the name of the Trinity, and that Christ was not baptized upon a profession of faith; would either of these circum-

stances have any influence to alter the act of baptizing? It might as well be said, that immersion is not the same act, unless performed for the same reasons. Such a supposition is too absurd to be admitted.

There is as much reason to suppose, that Christ was not baptized in the same manner as John's other candidates were, inasmuch as he was not baptized for the same reasons; as to suppose that the apostles baptized in a different manner, merely because they made use of different words in the administration. There is no intimation in the scriptures, that the rite was performed in different ways.

To get clear of all the evidence in favour of our sentiments arising from John's baptism, you may be told that the christian dispensation did not commence until after the resurrection of Christ; that, consequently, all the baptisms previous to this were under the law. If you admit this argument, I beg to know by what authority you will commemorate the Lord's Supper! for this was instituted before Christ's death, and consequently must have been under the law! Shocking as this may appear, such extraordinary lengths have many gone, in order to support what we believe to be an error.

If in reading the preceding remarks, the Spirit of God should enlighten your mind to see the path of duty, then I conjure you by the love you bear to the Saviour, and by the still greater love he has manifested to you in leaving you an example, that you would follow his steps. As you regard the peace of your own soul, and the purity of the church of Christ, let me entreat you to pursue that path which is so plainly marked out in the gospel. You will remember, that in keeping his commands there is great reward. We have need to take heed to ourselves, that we do not fall under the censure which Christ passed upon the pharisees, whom he charged with *laying aside the commandment of God, to hold the tradition of men.* Can you, without submitting voluntarily to this institution, as you believe it was practised by Christ and his followers, say, "*Lord, it is done as thou ha*

*commanded ?*" We are not insensible, that THIS SECT, like the ancient christians, is every where spoken against. But what is the *friendship of the world*, which is declared to be *enmity with God*, compared to the approbation of Heaven ? We love and esteem our friends, especially such as are pious ; but ought we not to love Christ better ? Indeed, if we do not, he has declared that we are not worthy of him.

It has been said, with a view no doubt to dissuade persons from being "re-baptized," (as it is called,) that we thereby "renounce that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost whom they adore." This, if true, would be a very solemn consideration ! But can it be admitted as truth ? Is it renouncing the sacred Trinity, to be voluntarily baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ? A most extraordinary conclusion ! No, we publicly and solemnly own those sacred names, and before angels and men avow our submission to Christ, as the only Lawgiver and Head of his church.

That you, my dear Friend, and all others who are desirous of *keeping the ordinances as they were first delivered to the churches*, may be led in the right way, and be made fruitful in every good work, shall be the fervent prayer of

Yours, in the gospel of a precious Saviour.

FINIS.